



# World Day of Prayer

by Cathy Reid

In Canada, the World Day of Prayer (WDP) is organized by the Women's Inter-Church Council (WICC) of Canada. The motto is Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action. The ecumenical services are usually held on the first Friday of March each year. The International World Day of Prayer Committee states, "It is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice."

The origins date back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century when US and Canadian Christian women started working together to support women's involvement in mission at home and abroad. The following is a timeline showing how WDP was formed.

- 1812 Women encouraged one another to pray together.
- 1887 Presbyterian women in US called for a National Day of Prayer.

- 1895 Anglican women in Canada set aside a National Day for Missions.
- 1918 In the aftermath of the First World War, Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian women called an inter-church meeting which led to a day of prayer in January 1920.
- 1922 Canadian and US committees agreed to use the same theme for the Day of Prayer.
- 1927 The title was shortened to World Day of Prayer.

Today, Christian women and men in over 170 countries unite to pray for justice for women and children. Each year in a different host country, a team of women prepares the content, highlighting its culture and justice issues. A list of the host countries is available on the Women's Inter-Church Council website at [wicc.org](http://wicc.org)

The host country in 2019 was Slovenia. This country held its first World Day of Prayer in 2000. The service was very moving and was much appreciated by everyone who attended.

In 2020, the service will be prepared by the women of Zimbabwe.

WDP is an amazing opportunity to pray alongside over 75,000 Canadians and millions of global participants. In addition to the power of prayer, learning, and fellowship, the offerings from these services fund program work with grassroots projects for women in the following areas: violence against women, economic justice, health, education, racism, and peace.

From the WDP offering in 2018, the WICC was able to fund

\$80,000 for projects in Canada and abroad. Grant applications have to be submitted to WICC by March 31 each year and grants are awarded in July.

### **World Day of Prayer at Stroud by Eileen Robinson**

Friday, March 1, turned out to be a bright, wintry day as I made my way to Stroud Presbyterian Church for the World Day of Prayer service.

As I entered the sanctuary, the sun shone through the beautiful stained-glass windows and peaceful music was being played by the talented Ruth Obando. A table was decorated with some symbols of the theme country Slovenia, including grapes, embroidery, and carnations.

Through the different readings, I

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## **The Painting: Artist's Statement**

**by Rezka Arnuš**

“I wanted to present two topics: the country of Slovenia and the main biblical story of the worship service. On the top of the picture one can see the movement of women in the Slovenian traditional costumes covered with a lace cap, mob cap, or scarf.

“The semicircular ornament with Slovenian folk embroidery represents a plate or a table with our best known

national dish, a cake—potica. Grapes are from vineyards from different Slovenian wine-producing regions. As a souvenir and an expression of love, the table is decorated with a licitar heart made with the honey of native Carniola bees, and a Slovenian carnation flower.

“Partly under the table, one can see children from the margins of society. They have heard the invitation to the feast. A woman who is homeless carries a child in her arms; a woman who is blind, with arms in front, already prepares to take a step; a

learned about the everyday difficulties that the women of Slovenia encounter. Many had suffered discrimination and lack of opportunity to pursue what we consider the basics of life—education, work, decent wages, and acceptance. Yet through the challenges these women face, they still found their strength in their faith in God who would be there for them, every step of the way.

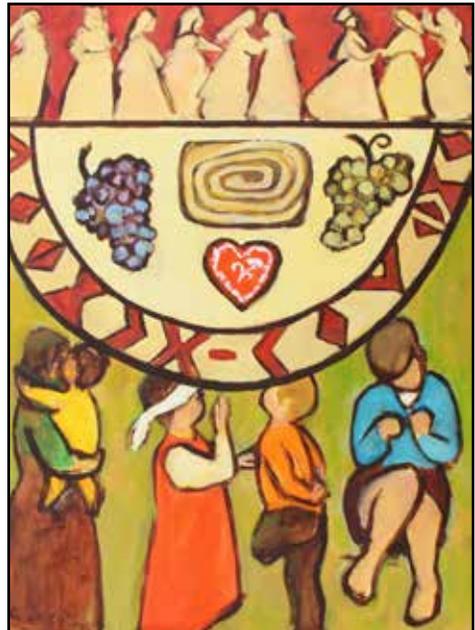
In our own society, here in Canada, we see these same problems facing some in our community. In the scripture passage, we learned of the radical hospitality shown by the rich man at his banquet. It stressed to me the importance of Christians, everyday people like me, to show the same kind of hospitality to all those

around us. We need to show our love for Christ through our actions, and to be more attentive and supportive to those around us in difficult situations.

The hymns we sang, Song of Joy, Now thank we all our God, and Lead on O King eternal, helped reinforce the important message of this prayer service. I left the service feeling inspired and determined to continue to share and show my faith through actions not just words. I added Slovenia to my prayer list which I keep at my bedside. I will include it in my daily nighttime ritual. Attending the service was a wonderful experience and one I will remember for a long time. Thank you, God, for the love you have shown all of us and help me to do the same.

person who is deaf responds by changing the position of his head; with her involuntary movements, a girl with spastic cerebral palsy shows her joyous acceptance of the invitation to the banquet.

“I used red and white, the colours of Slovenian folk embroidery. The green background colour emphasizes the green Slovenian fields and forests. The warm colours of children express the joy of heartfelt invitation.”



## **World Day of Prayer at Trenton by Doreen Dath**

WDP is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome everyone to join in prayer and action for peace and justice.

In 2018, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Trenton hosted the service after which the Church that will be host in the following year is selected. St. James Fellowship (Anglican) Church, a newly planted church in Trenton, hosted the 2019 WDP. Planning each year begins in late January/early February when the invites are sent out to all Christian churches in our community to attend a planning meeting at the host church.

At that meeting, those present select portions of the service to participate in. The year's theme was Come—Everything is Ready. The service was written by the women of the WDP committee in Slovenia and our prayers were for that country.

The planning committee in Trenton selects the hymns, and this year's speaker Marilou Timpson from St. James, spoke on the parable of The Great Banquet. Our first hymn was, His banner over me is love. Readers representing women's voices in Slovenia (who were women from the various churches) spoke throughout the service. The stories that were told gave a picture of the women in Slovenia.

An offering was collected for the WICC. The service is traditionally held in the evening on the first Friday of March. Following the service, the host church provided refreshments, which included some recipes from the country of Slovenia.

Unfortunately, not all the churches in Trenton attended the planning meeting and because the service is led by women, very few men come to the WDP service. This year, we were happy to report that there was a male youth (my grandson) and an adult male who took part in the service.

## **World Day of Prayer at Ottawa by Patricia Grainger**

To celebrate the World Day of Prayer this year, a small group from St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Kars went to St. James United Church in the village of Osgoode, Ontario, for an ecumenical service with our neighbouring United and Anglican Churches.

About 25 of us worshipped together as we followed the service prepared by the women of Slovenia. The welcoming invitation of Come—Everything is Ready was felt by each of us as we arrived. The text of the Call to Prayer was moving and the stories of the five Slovenian women gave us a glimpse into their everyday life.

We relaxed to the peaceful, uplifting music that was interspersed during this part of the service. The

repetition of the sung response of, Now let us all God's love receive, reinforced the message that God's house and God's table are open to everyone. These words gave the service a global significance beyond all that was presented about Slovenia.

We enjoyed watching the accompanying video as we learned about the history of the country, the terrain and wildlife, the health and welfare of the Slovenes, the food and religion of the country, and the importance placed on providing free education.

After the worship, all were invited to gather for tea, coffee, and a variety of delicious sweet treats, including a traditional Slovenian walnut loaf made by one of the ladies of the United Church. It was very tasty, not heavy, and added an extra special something to our Slovenian get-away!

### **World Day of Prayer in Langley by Betty Siverns**

The World Day of Prayer was held on March 1. The service was prepared by the women of Slovenia, a first for them. They have been participated in this event since 2000.

The service was quite a banquet. It was a feast of learning, a feast of love, and a feast of joy in the knowledge of God's forgiveness.

We were greeted in Slovic: "Dober dan" (Good day), then were

introduced to the country of Slovenia, and given a brief history of the country during and after WWII. We were also amazed at the insightful art of Rezka Arnus. How does a person with only 5% vision produce such beautiful creations?

Our meal then started with prayer and thanksgiving for the people and country of Slovenia, and with a reminder to see those nearby who also need our attention. We were then served with the stories of five women of Slovenia and were reminded of the many ways that lives are harmed by circumstances beyond their control.

As we listened to the reading of the Parable of the Great Banquet we were reminded of our responsibility as directed by Jesus to welcome the outsiders, to care for the sick, and to feed the hungry. Then the leader invited us to share with those close to us how we would feel if our invitation was rejected. Who would we invite to our banquet?

Finally, as we gave thanks for the banquet we had enjoyed, through the words of women of various ages, we sang of being grateful for God's love and forgiveness. We were then dismissed with a blessing and The Lord's Prayer.

Of course, no banquet ends without food for the body as well as for the spirit! A delicious spread of savory and sweet delights awarded us as we left the sanctuary for a time of fellowship.